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Supreme Court drug-testing decision “is a victory for the Bill of Rights”

Libertarian candidate wins 8-to-1 victory; Georgia law struck down

WASHINGTON, DC — “A victory for the Bill of Rights and a defeat for the War on Drugs” — that’s how the Libertarian Party characterized yesterday’s 8-to-1 Supreme Court decision that declared unconstitutional a Georgia law mandating drug tests for political candidates.

“This decision is a small step towards sanity in a nation that is rapidly being stripped of its basic civil liberties,” said the party’s national director, Perry Willis. “The Supreme Court has finally put a limit on what the government can do in the name of winning the War on Drugs.”

The case was especially important to Libertarians because the plaintiff, Walker Chandler, challenged the Georgia law after he ran for lieutenant governor as a Libertarian Party candidate in 1994 — starting a three-year legal odyssey that led him all the way to the nation’s highest court.

Today, a jubilant Chandler said, “It’s a wonderful day when the Supreme Court puts limitations on the excesses of government.”

Speaking on behalf of the Libertarian Party, Willis agreed. “It’s a great day for Libertarians — and a great day for any American who cherishes civil liberties,” he said.

“Politicians love to use the War on Drugs as an excuse to repeal civil liberties.

But today, the court ruled that there are limits to how blatantly politicians can violate the Fourth Amendment. That’s why this decision is a victory for the Bill of Rights and a defeat for the War on Drugs,” he said.

The case of *Chandler v. Miller* has its origins in 1990, when Georgia passed a one-of-a-kind law requiring all candidates for state office — governor, attorney general, state representatives — to submit a urine sample that tested negative for drugs before being allowed on the ballot.

Under protest, Chandler took and passed the drug test, won more than 47,000 votes as the Libertarian candidate for lieutenant governor in the 1994 election, and filed a lawsuit questioning the constitutionality of the law. “Surely there are *some* limits to suspicionless drug testing,” said Chandler.

The Supreme Court agreed. In a lopsided 8-to-1 decision, the court ruled that the Georgia law was in violation of the Fourth Amendment because candidate drug testing “does not fit within the closely guarded category of constitutionally permissible suspicionless searches.”

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